Floor Discussion

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The first paper in this session, Census and Surveys from Space, was not given because the author did not attend the conference.

The second paper, presented by Michael Lettre of the Maryland Office of Planning, was about a technology which uses a paper questionnaire with embedded electronics to store survey answers. The questions could be printed on the paper, or read from a liquid crystal display (LCD) attached to the paper.

The floor discussion opened with a question from Bill LaPlant of the Census Bureau about the cost per questionnaire. The cost of the embedded electronics ranges from $1.50 to $8.00 per form. The speaker noted that this cost was lower than the costs associated with traditional mail questionnaires because the data did not need to be scanned or keyed in. He also mentioned that cost of the electronics was declining.

Tracy Wellens of the Census Bureau asked about respondent reactions to the questionnaire. The speaker replied that so far reactions were favorable.

Bill Nicholls of the Census Bureau commented that using this technology would be a major change for continuous measurement surveys which are done with paper questionnaires.

Elizabeth Sweet of the Census Bureau asked if the form would fit into a legal size envelope. The speaker said it would, but a fold could not go across a LCD screen.

Other questions (speakers not identified)

Are the forms reusable? Yes.

Is it necessary to maintain power? No, the questionnaire has a ferrous core memory.

Can the replies be loaded directly into SAS? No, a conversion step is needed.

When do you expect to be in mass production?
The manufacturer is designing a form for absentee ballots.

Is there a problem with other people seeing the questions on the display? The screen is a dot matrix LCD; the size is being varied to test for privacy.